

Abstract

The main goal of diploma thesis „European Waltz under the Austrian Baton? - Analysis of the Austrian EU-Presidency in the Years 1998 and 2006“ is an evaluation of two Austrian presidencies in the European Union in the years 1998 and 2006. In connection with the Austrian foreign policy and its position in Central Europe, stigmatized by political sanctions from the side of the „EU-14“ in 2000, its delayed access into the European integration structures in 1995 and with its neutrality status, it will be interesting to find out how Austria managed to rule the European Union. Austria held the EU-presidency for the first time as an unexperienced newcomer after only three and half years of membership in the EU. Eight years later, Vienna governed the EU for the second time, but this time as a skilled member after a decade of its active membership in the European Union. In spite of the difference of the two distinct times, the author will attempt to compare both presidencies. Will Vienna achieve as the chief of the EU the goals stated by its working program for the presidency and will it be able to face the greatest challenge of its European policy? As often happens with presidencies, the agenda could be heavily influenced by unexpected events that cannot be controlled. In order to judge the quality of the Austrian output will diploma thesis analyse not only this issue but other important topics as well. Due to strong euroscepticism in Austria towards the EU, it will be beneficial to examine the attitude of the Austrian government towards the continuing integration process of new countries into the structures of the European Union. Besides other important questions will this thesis try to answer whether small countries such as Austria are capable of enforcing their national interests and great European visions during the period of their EU-presidency. The author hopes to give the reader a good assessment of the role of a small Central European country leading Europe.